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This resolution urges the expansion of U.S.-Mongolia economic ties and encourages the Mongolian Government to continue to increase transparency, freedom, and good governance.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Congresswoman TITUS for her work on this bipartisan resolution. I urge all Members to support it, and I reserve the balance of my time.

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, December 7, 2020.

Hon. ELIOT L. ENGEL,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Affairs,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN ENGEL: In recognition of the desire to expedite consideration of H. Res. 1100, Reaffirming the strategic partnership between the United States and Mongolia and observing the 30th anniversary of democracy in Mongolia, the Committee on Ways and Means agrees to waive formal consideration of the resolution as to provisions that fall within the rule X jurisdiction of the Committee on Ways and Means.

The Committee on Ways and Means takes this action with the mutual understanding that we do not waive any jurisdiction over the subject matter contained in this or similar legislation, and the Committee will be appropriately consulted and involved as the resolution or similar legislation moves forward so that we may address any remaining issues within our jurisdiction. The Committee also reserves the right to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees to any House-Senate conference involving this or similar legislation.

Finally, I would appreciate your response to this letter confirming this understanding and would ask that a copy of our exchange of letter on this matter be included in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD during floor consideration of H. Res. 1100.

Sincerely,

Hon. RICHARD E. NEAL,
Chairman,
Committee on Ways and Means.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC, December 1, 2020.

Hon. RICHARD E. NEAL,
Committee on Ways and Means,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN NEAL: I am writing to you concerning H. Res. 1100, Reaffirming the strategic partnership between the United States and Mongolia and observing the 30th anniversary of democracy in Mongolia. I appreciate your willingness to work cooperatively on this legislation.

I acknowledge that provisions of the bill fall within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Ways and Means under House Rule X, and that your Committee will forgo action on H. Res. 1100 to expedite floor consideration. I further acknowledge that the inaction of your Committee with respect to the bill does not waive any future jurisdictional claim over the matters contained in the bill that fall within your jurisdiction. I will also support the appointment of Committee on Ways and Means conferees during any House-Senate conference convened on this legislation.

Lastly, I will ensure that our exchange of letters is included in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD during floor consideration of the bill. Thank you again for your cooperation regarding the legislation. I look forward to continuing to work with you as the measure moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

ELIOT L. ENGEL,
Chairman.

Mr. YOHO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the United States and Mongolia have a robust relationship, distinguished by our shared democratic ideals and strengthened by close economic and diplomatic cooperation.

This year marks the 30th anniversary of democracy in Mongolia. Mongolia was the first nation in Asia to transition from communism to democracy, marking an important juncture in the continent's history.

Years later, Mongolia remains an important democratic partner in the Indo-Pacific but finds itself in a challenging location, sandwiched entirely between Russia and China. What happens in Mongolia has direct implications for the United States. If malign actors compromise Mongolia's territorial integrity or ability to pursue independent foreign policy, the security of the United States is also at risk.

I have consistently warned about the Chinese Communist Party's malign activity around the world as the former chairman and current ranking member of the House Asia, the Pacific, and Nonproliferation Subcommittee. I was also encouraged to see the recommendations released this year by the China Task Force.

After months of classified and unclassified briefings, the China Task Force released a report with 82 key findings and more than 400 forward-looking recommendations. Many of these focus on the CCP's predatory Belt and Road Initiative, which is infamous for its debt trap diplomacy.

Mongolia is a formal participant in this initiative, and China currently supplies the largest portion of their foreign investment. This is why it is essential that the U.S. continue to develop our strategic partnership with Mongolia. We must be their most meaningful third neighbor, and that term describes the Mongolian relationship with countries other than China and Russia.

One of the ways we can do this is by strengthening Mongolia from within by supporting small and medium enterprises and industries like the cashmere production.

This past year, I reintroduced the Mongolia Third Neighbor Trade Act, which would allow duty-free entry of Mongolian cashmere into the United States. This one bill would create over 50,000 jobs, it is estimated, in Mongolia, primarily women jobs, at a cost less than \$1 million over a 10-year period to the American taxpayers.

The cashmere wool industry is particularly important to Mongolia's economy; but while Mongolia produces over one-third of the world's cashmere, almost all finished products are processed and exported from China. Duty-free entry for the United States' imports of Mongolian cashmere would benefit the United States by facilitating increased trade with Mongolia and reducing U.S. imports of Chinese

cashmere products. The measure would likewise benefit Mongolia by reducing Mongolia's economic dependence on China and promoting the development of Mongolia's garment industry, an industry in which 90 percent of workers are women.

We must also offer a better alternative through initiatives like the Third Neighbor Trade Act and this resolution. That is exactly what this bill does by reaffirming our relationship with our like-minded partner, Mongolia. We will never allow adversaries to undermine peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, for over three decades, the relationship between the United States and Mongolia has continued to grow and strengthen. Mongolia is a strong democratic partner in the Indo-Pacific, and the United States has become an important third neighbor.

I would like to congratulate the Mongolian people on their 30th anniversary of democracy and look forward to continuing to build our partnership.

Mongolia's success as a democracy and continued sovereignty is extremely relevant to the security of the United States, the Indo-Pacific region, and the world. For this reason, Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this resolution, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume for the purpose of closing.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to strongly support H. Res. 1100, which recognizes Mongolia's commitment to democracy, security, cooperation, and respect for human rights and reaffirms the important growing partnership between our two nations.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to, once again, thank Ms. TITUS and Mr. YOHO for their leadership on this resolution. I urge all Members to join us in supporting it, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. RASKIN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 1100, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

The title of the resolution was amended so as to read: "A resolution reaffirming the importance of the strategic partnership between the United States and Mongolia."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CALLING FOR GLOBAL REPEAL OF BLASPHEMY, HERESY, AND APOSTASY LAWS

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 512) calling for the global repeal of blasphemy, heresy, and apostasy laws, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 512

Whereas Article 18 of the International Declaration of Human Rights states that “[e]veryone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance”;

Whereas many countries continue to have criminal blasphemy laws and punish people who engage in expression deemed by the government to be blasphemous, heretical, apostate, defamatory of religion, or insulting to religion or to religious symbols, figures, or feelings, and such punishment can include fines, imprisonment, and capital punishment including by beheading;

Whereas blasphemy laws have affected Christians, Muslims, Jews, Hindus, Baha’i, secularists, and many other groups, are inconsistent with international human rights standards because they establish and promote official religious orthodoxy and dogma over individual liberty, and often result in violations of the freedoms of religion, thought, and expression that are protected under international instruments, including Articles 18 and 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR);

Whereas the United Nations Human Rights Committee stated in General Comment 34 that “[p]rohibitions of displays of lack of respect for a religion or other belief system, including blasphemy laws, are incompatible with the [ICCPR].”;

Whereas the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) has found that blasphemy charges are often based on false accusations, are used for sectarian or political purposes, and foster religious intolerance, discrimination, and violence;

Whereas USCIRF has found that at least 70 countries had blasphemy laws as of 2018;

Whereas these laws were present in 18 Middle East and North African countries, 8 countries in the Americas, 18 Asia-Pacific countries, 14 European countries, and 12 Sub-Saharan African countries;

Whereas the Pew Research Center found that countries with laws against blasphemy, apostasy, or defamation of religion were more likely to have severe governmental restrictions on religion, and to experience social hostilities based on religion, than countries that did not have such laws;

Whereas restrictive laws beyond those penalizing blasphemy, heresy, and apostasy further limit religious freedom, such as extremism laws—

(1) in Russia that have been used to ban Jehovah’s Witnesses as an extremist organization and fueled persecution of this religious group;

(2) in China, to arbitrarily detain an estimated 800,000 to 2,000,000 Uighur Muslims in internment camps because they followed Islamic rituals and practices; and

(3) in North Korea, to detain an estimated 50,000 to 70,000 Christians in labor camps because they followed the tenets of Christianity;

Whereas an international group of experts convened by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights recommended in 2012 that “[s]tates that have blasphemy laws should repeal the[m] as such laws have a stifling impact on the enjoyment of freedom of religion or belief and healthy dialogue and debate about religion.”;

Whereas blasphemy laws are inconsistent with United Nations resolutions adopted by consensus since 2011 recognizing that religious intolerance is best fought through positive measures, such as education, outreach, and counter-speech, and that criminalization of speech is warranted only for the prevention of imminent violence;

Whereas according to the annual religious freedom report published by the Department of State in 2015, attackers in Bangladesh killed five allegedly anti-Islamic or secularist writers and publishers, and injured three others;

Whereas in response to these killings, the Home Minister of Bangladesh, rather than condemning the murders, called on bloggers and others to refrain from writings that could hurt the religious feelings of others and added that violators of the warning would be subject to prosecution under the restrictive religious freedom laws of Bangladesh;

Whereas a 2016 report by USCIRF on Bangladesh found that religious and civil society groups fear that increasing religious extremism will result in more criminal attacks and threats;

Whereas restrictive religious freedom laws validate and promote social violence targeted at religious minorities and dissenters, whether Christian, Muslim, secularist, or other;

Whereas USCIRF has found that in Pakistan, blasphemy laws have been used to prosecute and persecute Muslims, Christians, secularists, and others;

Whereas according to a Pew Center report on religion and public life, Pakistan stands out for having one of the highest levels of restrictions on religion when both government restrictions and social hostilities are taken into account;

Whereas USCIRF has found egregious examples of the enforcement of blasphemy laws and vigilante violence connected to blasphemy allegations in Pakistan, where blasphemy charges are common and numerous individuals are in prison, with a high percentage sentenced to death or to life in prison;

Whereas, as of May 2018, USCIRF was aware of approximately 40 individuals on death row for blasphemy in Pakistan or serving life sentences;

Whereas Asia Bibi was sentenced to death for blasphemy in 2010 and was held for 8 years, until the Supreme Court of Pakistan overturned her conviction in 2018, upheld her acquittal, and granted her permission to leave the country to flee the threats against her in 2019;

Whereas Pakistan selectively enforces the blasphemy and anti-terrorism laws against minority religious groups, including by specifically targeting Ahmadiyya Muslims such as Abdul Shakoor, an 80-year old optician and bookseller who was recently released after serving over three years in prison on such charges;

Whereas blasphemy laws in Pakistan have fostered a climate of impunity, as those who falsify evidence go unpunished and allegations often result in violent mob attacks or assassinations, with little to no police response;

Whereas in 2017, the Christian Governor of Jakarta, Indonesia, was convicted for blasphemy of Islam and sentenced to two years in jail;

Whereas several countries that maintained blasphemy laws have recently taken steps towards removing these provisions, including Greece, Ireland, and Canada;

Whereas blasphemy laws in the United States were invalidated by the adoption of the First Amendment to the Constitution, which protects the freedoms of thought, con-

science, expression, and religious exercise; and

Whereas the United States has become a beacon of religious freedom and tolerance around the world: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) recognizes that blasphemy, heresy, and apostasy laws inappropriately position governments as arbiters of religious truth and empower officials to impose religious dogma on individuals or minorities through the power of the government or through violence sanctioned by the government;

(2) calls on the President and the Secretary of State to make the repeal of blasphemy, heresy, and apostasy laws a priority in the bilateral relationships of the United States with all countries that have such laws, through direct interventions in bilateral and multilateral fora;

(3) encourages the President and the Secretary of State to oppose—

(A) any efforts, by the United Nations or by other international or multilateral fora, to create an international anti-blasphemy norm, such as the “defamation of religions” resolutions introduced in the United Nations between 1999 and 2010; and

(B) any attempts to expand the international norm on incitement to include blasphemy or defamation of religions;

(4) supports efforts by the United Nations to combat intolerance, discrimination, or violence against persons based on religion or belief without restricting expression, including United Nations Human Rights Council Resolution 16/18 (2011) and the Istanbul Process meetings pursuant to such resolution, that are consistent with the First Amendment to the Constitution;

(5) calls on the President and the Secretary of State to designate countries that enforce blasphemy, heresy, or apostasy laws as “countries of particular concern for religious freedom” under section 402(b)(1)(A)(ii) of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6442(b)(1)(A)(ii)) for engaging in or tolerating severe violations of religious freedom, as a result of the abuses flowing from the enforcement of such laws and from unpunished vigilante violence often generated by blasphemy allegations;

(6) urges the governments of countries that enforce blasphemy, heresy, or apostasy laws to amend or repeal such laws, as they provide pretext and impunity for vigilante violence against religious minorities; and

(7) urges the governments of countries that have prosecuted, imprisoned, and persecuted people on charges of blasphemy, heresy, or apostasy to release such people unconditionally and, once released, to ensure their safety and that of their families.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. RASKIN) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOH) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Maryland.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H. Res. 512.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Maryland?

There was no objection.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, in this age of partisan division, one of the foundational American values still has the power to bring us together across the aisle: the defense of every human being's freedom of religious conscience and freedom of thought against government persecution. With H. Res. 512, we act today to stand up for religious and intellectual freedom in a world gone mad with religious discrimination, religious oppression, and religious violence.

H. Res. 512 calls for global repeal of laws punishing blasphemy, heresy, and apostasy, three religiously defined thought crimes that have no actual victims and, thus, no place in the criminal law of free nations. Yet governments in 84 countries, from Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Somalia to China, Russia, and Bangladesh, still use laws like these to intimidate, arrest, prosecute, and incarcerate members of minority religions, disfavored faiths, and freethinkers.

Putting people in jail or even condemning them to death for religiously subversive speech was not unknown in American colonies. In Massachusetts, Puritan Governors hanged Quakers for their heretical lectures in town squares.

But our enlightenment Constitution, especially our First Amendment free exercise and antireligious establishment clauses, put us squarely on the path of rejecting blasphemy laws and these other relics of inquisition, holy crusades, and New England witchcraft trials. Our law has gotten rid of obsolete offenses like blasphemy and apostasy because they have a purely religious character and do not refer to empirical social harms.

Blasphemy is making impious or sacrilegious statements about established churches or doctrines.

Heresy is taking religious or intellectual positions at odds with an established religious orthodoxy.

Apostasy is breaking away from a religious orthodoxy or a church.

As offensive as we might consider other people's religious views and utterances, in America today, people's thoughts and words about religion are absolutely protected by the First Amendment. But in many parts of the world where religion is still actively weaponized by theocratic and authoritarian governments, these imaginary offenses can still get you thrown into jail, harassed, and executed, or simply stopped and torn limb from limb by state-sanctioned lynch mobs.

Religious people of the wrong faith are the most common victims of blasphemy and heresy laws.

You might be a practicing Christian or Hindu, Mr. Speaker, in an officially Muslim state like Libya or Afghanistan or a devout Muslim in a Hindu society like India. You might be a non-religious person targeted by your enemies or state authorities.

You might be a 22-year-old Nigerian gospel musician like Yahaya Sharif-Aminu, who was convicted of blas-

phemy in a state sharia court in Kano State on August 10 and has been sentenced to death by hanging for something he said on a WhatsApp group on the internet.

Mr. Speaker, you might be a Sudanese Christian like Mariam Ibrahim, who was jailed for apostasy because, although she had been a devout Christian for her entire life, government officials demanded that she follow her absent father's Muslim faith. She was held in jail with her 20-month-old son and forced to give birth to her daughter in prison while her legs were shackled to the floor.

Mr. Speaker, you might be a 13-year-old Muslim boy in Nigeria like Omar Farouq, who was sentenced to 10 years at hard labor for blasphemy when he said something about Allah in an argument with friends, a brutal miscarriage of justice condemned by UNICEF and child advocates all over the world.

You might even belong to the wrong sect of the official state religion. In the Islamic State of Pakistan, for example, people belonging to the Ahmadiyya Muslim faith are being persecuted as heretics and apostates as if this were the Middle Ages.

At least five Ahmadiyya Muslims have been killed in Pakistan this year alone because of their faith, including Tahir Ahmad Naseem, an American citizen who was murdered in broad daylight in a courtroom while standing trial for blasphemy charges just for practicing his own religion. While his teenage killer was arrested, he is being celebrated now as a martyr by the media and members of the police service who watched him kill Naseem.

Mr. Speaker, the global assault on religious and intellectual freedom today is taking place in many of the world's largest countries:

China confines millions of Uighur Muslims in miserable reeducation camps and forces them into slave labor in Xinjiang province;

Russia has decreed that Jehovah's Witnesses are an extremist group and confiscated their property, jailed their members, and even allegedly tortured some of them;

India recently passed draconian laws burdening the rights of disfavored Muslim minorities.

With this resolution, Mr. Speaker, against the new wave of global religious oppression and persecution, America can once again take the lead in defending the basic human rights of religious and intellectual freedom all over the world.

James Madison, the author of our First Amendment, denounced that "diabolical, hell-conceived principle of persecution," and he stated in his remonstrance against religious assessments that "the religion . . . of every man must be left to the conviction and conscience of every man."

Let us share this principle with the nations of the world with this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. YOHO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the right to practice one's faith is the most fundamental freedom there is. There is a reason our Founding Fathers made it the First Amendment: Our Founders understood that someone's right to worship was sacred and should belong to all people regardless of their faith.

If religious freedom is taken away, all other freedoms are subject to being taken away also. It is just that simple.

Unfortunately, religious freedom still does not exist everywhere. Today, religious minorities are persecuted all over the globe.

According to the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, about one-third of the countries around the world still have laws against blasphemy. In many dictatorships, people are not allowed to worship anything but the state. To do so would be seen as a threat to the government because they do not recognize a higher power.

As a result, religious minorities are targeted in some countries with severe brutality. People are being beaten, arrested, and tortured. Houses of worship are razed and destroyed. In countries like Iran, Pakistan, and others, ascribing to a different religion could mean the death penalty. In other places, it can mean forced labor or a public whipping.

This is simply unacceptable. Today, the House has an opportunity to stand up for religious freedom around the world.

This is an important resolution. This resolution makes the repeal of blasphemy, heresy, and apostasy laws a priority everywhere. It designates countries that enforce such laws as countries of particular concern for religious freedom and calls on all governments to release religious prisoners of conscience.

The United States has always been a leader when it comes to religious freedom. Today, we have a chance to lead again and to tell the world that we will not stand for religious intolerance.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all my colleagues to support H. Res. 512, and I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 1230

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume for the purpose of closing.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his very thoughtful and eloquent statement in defense of religious freedom, the value that unites us behind this powerful resolution, which will put the government squarely back in the fight to defend religious liberty all over the world and to oppose the spread of these blasphemy laws that are being used to persecute innocent people all over the globe.

Mr. Speaker, in our country, the religious Free Exercise Clause and the clause against establishment of religion stand best when they stand together because they both stand for the

principle that no particular religious sect can seize control of state power and then persecute members of other religious groups, but that is what is happening in so many places all over the world.

Mr. Speaker, our experience in the separation of church and state and standing up for the free exercise of religion is something that we can continue to proudly promote to the rest of the world, and we do have something that we think we can teach other nations that want to follow the path of democracy and freedom.

As the U.S. works to advance human rights, it is critical that we put this question of freedom of thought, freedom of conscience right at the heart of our efforts. Everyone must be able to practice their faith—or no faith at all—without the threat of government violence and persecution.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to support this excellent measure, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, as a co-sponsor and a senior Member of the House of Representatives, I rise in strong support of this bipartisan resolution, H. Res. 512, "Calling for the global repeal of blasphemy, heresy, and apostasy laws".

First and foremost, I would like to recognize and thank Congressman JAMIE RASKIN for his leadership on this vital resolution.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution calls upon the President and the Department of State to prioritize the repeal of blasphemy, heresy, and apostasy laws in bilateral relationships between the United States and countries that have such laws.

It also designates countries that enforce such laws as "countries of particular concern" with respect to religious freedom.

Furthermore, H. Res. 512 opposes efforts by the United Nations to implement an international anti-blasphemy norm.

Lastly, the resolution calls on the governments of countries that enforce such laws to either amend or repeal them as well as to release anyone imprisoned pursuant to them.

Blasphemy laws, as is noted in the resolution, lead to religious intolerance, discrimination and violence.

Moreover, these laws are often weaponized to target marginalized religious communities.

Charges can be based on false accusations and are commonly brought forth for sectarian or political purposes.

In 2019, the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom released its 20th Annual Report, recommending that the U.S. Department of State designate sixteen nations as "countries of particular concern" due to their severe suppression of religious freedom.

For example: In Burma, a predominantly Buddhist nation, the Rohingya Muslim people have been subject to what the U.N. high commissioner for human rights has called "a textbook example of ethnic cleansing";

In China, over 1 million ethnic Uyghur and Kazakh Muslims have been arbitrarily detained in concentration camps styled as "political education" camps, where they are subject to torture and inhumane conditions;

In Iran, the Baha'i community is treated by the government as a band of heretics, and, as

of February 2017, at least 90 Baha'i were held in prison solely for their religious beliefs;

In Russia, Jehovah's Witnesses have been banned as an extremist group, and their properties have been seized and liquidated by order of the government. Dozens of individuals have been arrested on extremism charges and remain in custody or under house arrest; and

The right to worship freely is one of the founding and most essential principles of the United States.

As the world's oldest democracy, America has a responsibility to protect the freedoms of speech, expression, and religion against official persecution around the world.

Throughout my tenure in Congress, I have been a fierce defender of human rights, and this resolution is a small but important step in safeguarding the individual freedoms of choosing one's religion, or no religion at all, as well as worshipping and thinking freely no matter where you live.

With this in mind, I am proud to be a leader on this resolution, and I urge all Members on both sides of the aisle to join me in voting for H. Res. 512, "Calling for the global repeal of blasphemy, heresy, and apostasy laws."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. RASKIN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 512, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 3 of House Resolution 965, the yeas and nays are ordered.

Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

CONDEMNING IRAN'S STATE-SPONSORED PERSECUTION OF ITS BAHAI MINORITY

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 823) condemning the Government of Iran's state-sponsored persecution of its Baha'i minority and its continued violation of the International Covenants on Human Rights, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 823

Whereas, in 1982, 1984, 1988, 1990, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1996, 2000, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2009, 2012, 2013, 2015, 2016, 2017, and 2018, Congress declared that it deplored the religious persecution by the Government of Iran of the Baha'i community and would hold the Government of Iran responsible for upholding the rights of all Iranian nationals, including members of the Baha'i faith;

Whereas, since 1979, Iranian authorities have killed or executed more than 200 Baha'i leaders, and more than 10,000 have been dismissed from government and university jobs;

Whereas the Report of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran

(A/74/188) dated July 18, 2019, provides, in part—

(1) the Iranian authorities and the Iranian criminal justice system regard the Baha'is as "unprotected infidels"; the Baha'i faith is also "regarded as a misguided sect"; and "Baha'i worship and religious practices are deemed heresy";

(2) "Baha'is have been murdered with impunity and violations of their human rights have not been investigated.";

(3) members of the Baha'i faith "frequently face charges, such as, 'breaching national security', 'propaganda against the holy regime of the Islamic Republic of Iran', or 'propaganda activities against the regime in the interests of the Baha'i sect'";

(4) "Since August 2005, more than 1,168 Baha'is have been arrested and charged with vaguely worded offences.";

(5) "There were a total of 95 Baha'is reportedly arrested in 2018, compared with at least 84 in 2017 and 81 in 2016.";

(6) "On 1 January 2019, the court of appeal of Isfahan reportedly condemned, in separate judgments, nine Baha'i citizens to a total of 48 years of prison. They had been charged with 'membership of the illegal Baha'i community and propaganda against the regime by spreading the Baha'i faith in the society.'";

(7) directed by a 2007 letter from the Security Unit of the Public Place Supervision Office of the Islamic Republic of Iran to police commanders throughout the country, Iranian authorities continue to apply economic pressure against the Baha'i community, by banning them from specific professions and "halting their entry to 'high earning businesses'"; and

(8) "Since 2013, there have been more than 803 incidents of violations of economic rights of the Baha'is, including arbitrary shop closures, unfair dismissals from employment and the actual or threatened revocation of business licenses.";

Whereas the Department of State's International Religious Freedom Report for 2019, Iran section, provides, in part—

(1) "Non-Shia Muslims and those affiliated with a religion other than Islam, especially members of the Baha'i community, continued to face societal discrimination and harassment, and employers experienced social pressures not to hire Baha'is or to dismiss them from their private sector jobs."; and

(2) "The law bars Baha'is from founding their own educational institutions. A Ministry of Science, Research, and Technology order requires universities to exclude Baha'is from access to higher education or expel them if their religious affiliation becomes known.";

Whereas, on March 11, 2020, the Department of State released the Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2019 and, in connection with Iran, the report provides, in part—

(1) Iranian authorities "barred Baha'i students from higher education", and in 2019, denied enrollment to at least 22 Baha'i college applicants solely because of their religious affiliation despite passing the national admissions test;

(2) "The country materially contributed to human rights abuses . . . in Yemen, through its support for Houthi rebels and directing authorities in Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen to harass and detain Baha'is because of their religious affiliation."; and

(3) "In July 2019, Iran Wire, a human rights reporting agency, reported the case of Hamed Rezvani, a Baha'i musician and teacher, who left his home in Isfahan in December 2018 and has not been heard from since. Repeated requests by the Rezvani family for information from police and local intelligence have not produced any information about his disappearance.";